THE

FARCE

OF THE

VILLAGE LAWYER.

IN TWO ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL,

SMOKE-ALLEY.

M,DCC,XCII.

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Scout, the Village Lawyer.
Snarl, a rich old Mercer.
Charles, Son to Snarl.
Juſtice Mittimus, a juſtice.
Countryman.
Conſtables.
Sheepface, a Shepherd.

WOMEN.

Kate, Wife to Sheepface.
Mrs Scout, the Laywer's wife.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

VILLAGE LAWYER.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A rural Proſpect.*

Enter SCOUT *and* WIFE.

Scout.

NAY, nay good wife not ſo loud, or I vaniſh. Five and twenty years have I expos'd my organs of hearing (aye, and though I ſay it, without whining too) to the encounter of the toughest lungs in Weſtminſter Hall, with no worſe effect as yet, than a moderate deafneſs of the left ear; and a whizzing from time to time in the right, but that dear lovely, indefatigable tongue of thine, ſo far outdins the bar itſelf, that though a lawyer———

Mrs S. A lawyer! why in that trim you look more like a client, than a lawyer, and no one, to ſee you in ſuch a dreſs, wou'd imagine you had ever carried on a ſuit, in any one's name but your own. Out upon you, you are a diſgrace to the profeſſion, and had you a grain of ſpirit———

Scout. Spirit! oh, there at leaſt you wrong me, and I defy any practitioner of twice my ſtanding to produce more inſtances of ſpirit, than I have; who expoſes himſelf to the diſpleaſure of the judges; or the cenſure of

the courts. Shew me the man that ſets the pedantic regulations of common practice more at defiance than I have done; hav'n't I been obliged to quit the London courts only for diſplaying too much ſpirit on a certain occaſion?

Mrs S. Very fine truly! and do you boaſt of your blunders, and make a merit of your diſgrace?

Scout. This accident to be ſure forces me to try my talents in the obſcurity of rural practice; and yet ſince our removal to this village, though next door to Juſtice Mittimus, the beſt accuſtom'd Magiſtrate in the whole country, no favourable opportunity has offer'd; not a hare has been ſnar'd, or a head broke, or (what is ſtranger ſtill) a ſingle baſtard born, though we have been here a whole fortnight, nay the very cattle keep out of pound, to ſpite me. But come have a little patience, times will mend.

Mrs S. And in the mean time, your wife is to ſtarve, and your daughter, to loſe the opportunity of ſettling herſelf in the world, by a match with one or other of the young men, who court her, and whom the poverty of your appearance frighten away.

Scout. Why to ſay the truth there is nothing in my dreſs that can bring either lovers to my daughter, or clients to myſelf. Mankind is govern'd by ſhew, and the ſureſt way to obtain the countenance of the world is never to appear to want it. Cou'd I but once put on the appearance of buſineſs, the reality perhaps wou'd ſoon follow, let me ſee—cou'dn't I—yes I have it—I'll

go,

go, and purchaſe me a handſome ſuit of clothes immediately.

Mrs S. A handſome ſuit of clothes! what, without a farthing in your pocket?

Scout. Why not?—in London all your handſome ſuits are purchas'd the ſame way.—What colour ſhall I chuſe? hats wing—or——

Mrs S. Oh no matter for the colour if you can find any one kind enough to truſt you with the cloaths.

Scout. Then to loſe no time, I'll ſtep over the way to the rich drapers, my neighbour Snarl's.

Mrs S. To neighbour Snarl's! have a care what you do there. You know his Son Charles is in love with our Harriet, and wou'd have married her before now, but for fear of his father; I wou'd not for the world you ſhould do any thing to overthrow my daughter's hopes.

Scout. Never fear, ſtep in and fetch my hat and gown. [*Exit* Mrs S. I have juſt time to ſlip it on; it will give me a more creditable appearance before old Snarl, and theſe rags of mine into the bargain.

Enter Mrs Scout, *with gown and hat.*

Aye, this will do.—How many ſleek, ſpruce, demure looking gowns are there in the world, as well as this, good for nothing elſe, but covering things not fit to be ſeen. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE.—SNARL's *ſhop, Day-book, pen and ink, cloath on counter, &c.*

Enter SNARL *and* CHARLES.

Snarl. Well Son, I order'd you to enquire me out a Shepherd inſtead of that dog Sheepface; didn't I?

Char. Why ſurely Father, you have no fault to find with Sheepface.

Snarl. No; only that he is a thief! an arrant thief!

Char. I always found Sheepface a very faithful ſervant.

Snarl. To *you* he may, but not to *me*; he has been but a month in my ſervice, and there are fourteen of my wethers miſſing, now it is impoſſible ſo great a number in ſo ſhort a time cou'd die of the rot, as he ſays.

Char. You don't conſider what a havock a diſorder ſometimes makes.

Snarl. With the help of a Doctor, I grant you, but my ſheep had no Doctor, poor things! yet they cou'd not have made more haſte if they had been preſcrib'd for, by the whole faculty.—As for that dog, Sheepface, I have ſuſpected him for ſometime: but laſt night I caught him in the fact, and this morning I mean to bring him before Juſtice Mittimus; but firſt of all, I muſt know exactly, what's my loſs. Reach me the account of the flock. (*ſits down*) And if neighbour Gripe, the conſtable enquires for me; ſend him this way.

Enter

Enter SHEEPFACE.

Char. (*aſide to* Sheepface.) Sheepface all's out I find, father's confoundedly angry, try what you can do to ſoften it, but beware of ſpeaking. [*Exit.*

Snarl. Let me ſee;—"bought of Farmer Clod."—

Sheep. Save your good worſhip, Sweet Maſter Snarl.

Snarl. How villain, have you the impudence to appear in my ſight, after the tricks you have play'd me.

Sheep. Only to tell your ſweet worſhip, that neighbour Gripe has been talking to me about ſheep-ſtealing, and Juſtice Mittimus, and your worſhip, and a power of things, and ſo I ſaid I wou'dn't make a ſecret of it to my good maſter's worſhip any longer.

Snarl. Your affected innocence, ſha'n't ſave you, you raſcal; didn't I catch you laſt night killing one of the fatteſt of my wethers.

Sheep. Only to keep it from dying.

Snarl. Kill it, to keep it from dying!

Sheep. Of the rot, an' pleaſe your worſhip. Its a ſecret I learnt from the doctor in our town. He cur'd moſt of his patients the ſame way.

Snarl. The doctor, raſcal! the doctor has a licenſe to kill from the college.——Such ſheep as mine too—there was not in all England, ſuch another breed for Spaniſh wool.

Sheep. Be ſatisfied your worſhip with the blows you gave me, and let's make up matters, if its your worſhip's ſweet will and pleaſure.

Snarl.

Snarl. My will and pleaſure is to hang you, raſcal, to hang you.

Sheep. Conſider your worſhip, I was married but yeſterday, leave me to myſelf a week or two, and who knows but I may ſave you the trouble.

Snarl. No, raſcal, the gallows is the quickeſt remedy of the two, and every bit as ſure as t'other.

Sheep. Heaven give you good luck of it then, if it muſt be ſo, ſweet Maſter Snarl, I muſt go look for a lawyer, I ſee, or *might* will overcome *right*. Oh dear, that an honeſt man ſhould be treated ſo, only for killing a few ſheep to ſave 'em from dying. [*Exit.*

Snarl. (*ſitting down*) A dog! but he ſhall pay for this.—Let me ſee—two, and two are four——

Enter SCOUT.

Scout. The coaſt is clear at laſt—now or never.

Snarl. And ſeven—no, nine——

Scout. (*aſide*) Yonder's a piece of cloth now wou'd ſuit me to a hair. Give me leave Sir, to——

Snarl. Who's there? Gripe I ſuppoſe. Wait a moment honeſt Gripe.

Scout. I am lawyer Scout your neighbour——I am come to——

Snarl. I am lawyer Scout, my neighbour's very humble ſervant; but he and I have no buſineſs together, that I know of,—"Carried over"——

Scout. You'll have another ſtory to tell to-morrow, or I'm much miſtaken (*aſide*)—I find Sir, upon looking

ing over my late father's papers, an account of a debt left unpaid, and I am come——

Snarl. Its no buſineſs of mine; I owe no man a farthing.

Scout. I wiſh I cou'd ſay as much for myſelf; but I find that *my* father was indebted to *yours* in a ſmall balance of 50 pounds, and as a man of honor I am come home to pay it you.

Snarl. (*riſing*) My dear Sir, ten thouſand pardons, for my forgetfulneſs. I recollect you perfectly now. Yes, you liv'd in the next village, and you and I were ſworn comrades formerly. Pray Sir, be ſeated. (*hands a chair.*)

Scout. Dear Sir, if thoſe who are indebted to me, had a little of my punctuality, I ſhould be a richer man than I am, but to have my name in any one's book is a thing I can't bear.

Snarl. And yet the generality of people bear it very patiently.

Scout. I am upon thorns in a manner, while I owe one a farthing, and for that reaſon I am come to know when you'll be at leiſure to receive the money.

Snarl. No time like the preſent.

Scout. True, I have it at home, ready told; but as I have the management of my father's effects, only as guardian for my daughter Harriet, its proper that the other guardians ſhou'd be by at the payment.

Snarl. Very true Sir, then what do you think of tomorrow at three o'clock?

Scout,

Scout. With all my heart, but I have interrupted you perhaps. (*rises*) Why Sir, you do more buſineſs than all the ſhopkeepers in this part of the country put together.

Snarl. I can't complain.

Scout. No, you have ſuch a way with you, that thoſe who buy once, can't for the blood of them, help coming to you again. A pretty bit of cloth this——

Snarl. Very pretty.

Scout. One meets in your ſhop, ſuch a generoſity of treatment, a politeneſs of behaviour, that makes it pleaſanter to *pay* money to you than to receive it elſewhere. The wool ſeems tolerably fine.

Snarl. Right Spaniſh wool every hair of it, Sir.

Scout. So I thought; now we talk of Spaniſh wool, if I am not miſtaken, Mr Snarl, you and I went to ſchool together formerly.

Snarl. What, to old Ironſift?

Scout. The ſame; you were a very handſome youth I remember.

Snarl. So my mother always ſaid.

Scout. Egad, for old acquaintance ſake, you and I muſt eat a bit of dinner together to-day. I have a fine gooſe at home, that a client ſent me from Norfolk.

Snarl. A gooſe! that's my favourite diſh.

Scout. And my wife ſhall dreſs it by a family receipt. Its a treaſure, that receipt's a perfect treaſure. Her uncle, the late Alderman Dumpling, paſs'd through the

the whole circle of corporation honours, and died Mayor by virtue of that receipt.

Snarl. Aye! Aye!

Scout. Then Mrs Scout will be happy to ſee you; now I think on't, I promis'd her, that you ſhould have my cuſtom for the future, and to make a beginning I don't care if I have the pattern of a ſuit of cloaths from you now.

Snarl. Very happy to accommodate you Sir; what colour wou'd you chooſe?

Scout. Colour! why here's a pretty one enough to my mind Sir.

Snarl. Very pretty indeed Sir; its an iron grey. Shall I cut off the quantity you want, to have it ready?

Scout. To have it ready; no Mr Snarl, pay as you go, that's my rule; pay as you go.

Snarl. Ecod, an excellent rule it is.

Scout. Do you remember Mr Snarl, the evening we were together at the gooſe and gridiron?

Snarl. What the evening I ſo roaſted our curate.

Scout. The ſame; you were very ſevere on him. You had a world of wit.—Pray what muſt I pay you a yard for this cloth?

Snarl. Why Sir, another ſhou'd pay me nineteen and ſixpence; but come, you ſhall have it at nineteen ſhillings.—Now I think of it. Here's your quantity ready cut.

Scout. Ready cut—that's lucky indeed. (*ſnatches up the cloth.*)

Snarl. Stop a moment, till I meaſure it before you.

Scout. O fie! do you think I have any doubt of you.

Snarl. But the price.——

Scout. Poo, I never haggle with a friend; I leave all that to you. Good day.

Snarl. Let my ſhopman carry it over, and bring back——

Scout. No, no, don't take him from buſineſs. It is but a ſtep you know, and I'd carry it twice as far to oblige you. Compliments to Mrs Snarl;—good-bye to you, good-bye. [*Exit, Snarl follows.*

SCOUT'S *Houſe.*

Enter KATE *and* SHEEPFACE.

Kate. Lookye, if you want a Lawyer to bring you out of a ſcrape, my Maſter's the man for your money.

Sheep. I know it, he ſtood my friend once when brother and I were put to trouble;—wou'd you believe it only for mending the complexion of a bald fac'd horſe—but I have ſuch a treacherous memory, I don't know how it came about, but ſome how or other I forgot to pay him.

Kate. He'll not think of that perhaps: at any rate take care not to tell him, who the plaintiff is; for I know he wou'd not on any account be concern'd againſt Mr Snarl.

Sheep. I'll only tell him of my maſter, without mentioning any name; and he'll think I mean the Farmer I liv'd with, when I courted you firſt.

Kate. Do ſo, here he comes. [*Exit.*

Enter SCOUT.

Scout. Sure I ſhou'd know that face, I think—Yes, the ſame, Harkye didn't I ſave you and your brother from being hang'd ſome time ſince at York.

Sheep. Yes, your worſhip, yes.

Scout. By the ſame token, one of you forgot to pay me.

Sheep. Yes, that was brother.

Scout. The other was ſick at the trial, and died ſometime after in priſon.

Sheep. That was not I.

Scout. So I ſee.

Sheep. For all that I was ſicker, nor brother! and ſo as I was ſaying, I am come to beg of your worſhip to ſpeak for me before the Juſtice againſt his worſhip my maſter.

Scout. What the great farmer in the neghbourhood?

Sheep. He lives in the neighbourhood ſure enough, and your worſhip ſhall be paid to your heart's content.

Scout. Let me hear your caſe, and be ſure you tell it without diſguiſe.

Sheep. You muſt know then, an' pleaſe your worſhip, my maſter gives me but little wages, very ſmall wages, indeed, and ſo to take amends for that, without doing him any damage, I thought as how I'd beſt do a little buſineſs on my account with a worthy neighbour, a butcher by trade.

Scout. And what kind of buſineſs do you carry on?

Sheep. Under favour. I hinder ſheep from dying of the rot.

Scout. There's no harm in that; how do you contrive——

Sheep. Pleaſe your worſhip, I cut their throats, before they have time to catch it.

Scout. A very effectual remedy truly, and your maſter perhaps is unreaſonable enough to ſay you do ſo only to ſell the carcaſes, and keep the money to yourſelf?

Sheep. Yes, your worſhip, and I can't bear it out of his head, becauſe laſt night he ſaw me—I mean—I—muſt I tell the truth?

Scout. Yes, tell the truth here, or how ſhall we be able to lie to any purpoſe elſewhere.

Sheep. The truth of the matter then is, that laſt night, after I was married, having a little leiſure time upon my hands, I took a walk as far as our pens, and there as I was muſing on I don't know what;—out I takes my knife, and ſo happening by mere accident to put it (craving your worſhip's pardon) under the throat of a fat wether, I don't know how it came about, but it was not long there, before the wether died all of a ſudden as a body may ſay.

Scout. And there was ſome body looking on, the whole time, eh!

Sheep. Yes, maſter from behind the hedge, and ſo he will have it that 14 wethers, which I ſav'd from catching the rot, died all along of me. And ſo as your worſhip

ſhip may ſee, he laid ſuch a ſhower of blows upon me as put the bride out of temper the whole night; but I hope your worſhip will ſtand my friend, and not let me loſe the fruits of my honeſt induſtry all at once.

Scout. I underſtand you; there are two ways of proceeding in this affair; the firſt won't put you to a farthing of expence.

Sheep. Lets try that by all means.

Scout. With all my heart;——you have ſcrap'd up ſomething handſome in the courſe of your practice on your maſter's ſheep.

Sheep. Heaven knows I have been up late and early for it.

Scout. Your ſavings are all in hard caſh, I ſuppoſe.

Sheep. Yes, your worſhip.

Scout. You muſt hide the whole ſum immediately in the ſafeſt place you can think of.

Sheep. That I will, without fail.

Scout. Your maſter will be obliged to pay all coſts, and charges.

Sheep. So he ought; he can afford it.

Scout. And without a penny out of your pocket.

Sheep. Juſt as I wou'd have it.

Scout. He'll be put to the trouble of having you hang'd.

Sheep. Zounds, let us try the other way firſt.

Scout. Well then you are to be brought before Juſtice Mittimus.

Sheep. So I am told.

Scout. Take notice of this.

Sheep. Never fear me.

Scout. To every queſtion, aſk'd you, either by the court, the plaintiff, lawyer, or myſelf, make no reply but in the language of your own *ewes*, when they call their lambs; you can ſpeak that language, can't you?

Sheep. Its my mother tongue.

Scout. The blows you have received on your head, have ſuggeſted a ſcheme which aſſiſted by Mittimus's credulity may perhaps ſave you: but I expect to be well paid.

Sheep. That you ſhall as I am an honeſt man; good-day your worſhip. Lord, Lord! what troubles we poor folks have to keep our own in this world. Your ſervant your worſhip; I ſhall remember. Baa, baa, baa. [*Exit.*

Scout. So, if the contrivance I have thought of to elude my neighbour's demand, does not ſucceed; the money I get from this new client may ſtop his mouth perhaps. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Rural prospect.*

Enter SNARL.

Snarl.

THIS is a very busy day with me; I am to receive different sums of money from my worthy neighbour lawyer Scout, and to eat a goose with him, dress'd after a receipt of the late worshipful Alderman Dumpling. Well, I always said the aldermen were a useful body of men. But suppose I call in to see how matters stand, by way of asking how he does; here's a savoury smell! Egad they have put down the goose already. I'll go and have a sop in the pan. [*Exit.*

SCENE.—*A room in* SCOUT's *House.*

Enter SCOUT *and* WIFE.

Scout. Quick, quick old Snarl is coming up; I hear him on the stairs. Now mind your cue wife.

Mrs S. Never fear me; I'll be a good nurse I warrant me.

Enter SNARL.

Scout. (*in a chair as sick.*) Wi-f-e here's the apothecary.

Snarl. The apothecary!

Scout. He brings me the cooling mixture.

Snarl. The cooling mixture.

Mrs

Mrs S. O dear Sir, I hope you have brought ſomething to give my poor huſband a little eaſe. He has been in the condition you ſee this fortnight paſt.

Snarl. This fortnight woman, why———

Mrs S. Yes, this day fortnight, of all the good days in the year, he was taken with a lunacy fit, and has not been out of the room ſince.

Snarl. Zounds not out of the room; why he came to my houſe this morning by the ſame token he bought four yards of iron grey cloth of me, and I am come for the money. Good morrow Mr Scout.

Scout. Good morrow, good Mr Drench.

Snarl. Mr Drench!

Mrs S. He takes you for the apothecary Sir, pray leave the room for heaven's ſake, if you can give him no relief.

Snarl. But patience; you remember Mr Scout, this morning———

Scout. Yes, this morning, I bid my wife lay by for you———

Snarl. Aye, I knew he wou'd remember it.

Scout. I bid her lay by for you carefully, a large glaſs full of my———

Snarl. A glaſs full! I am come for my money. Zounds is that the coin I am to be paid in.

Mrs S. Dear Sir, retire.

Snarl. When I am paid, and not before.

Scout.

Scout. I beſeech you let me have no more of theſe odious pills; they had like to have made me give up the ghoſt.

Snarl. I wiſh they had made you give up my cloth.

Scout. (*riſing*) Wife, ſee, ſee, three large buzzing butterflies with amber heads, and chriſtal wings——there they go——there——tally o! holes, holes, tally o! ho, ho!

Snarl. I ſee none of them.

Mrs S. But you ſee he raves.

Scout. (*falling back in chair*) Save me good folks from the doctor, and a fig for the diſeaſe.

Snarl. O he talks good ſenſe now—Now I'll ſpeak to him—Neighbour Scout.

Scout. (*jumping up*) My client, my lord, Sir Hugh Witherington!

Snarl. Sir Hugh Witherington!

Scout. Charges the defendant Sir Hugh Montgomery——

Snarl. Gomery! why is it poſſible I cou'd have miſtaken another for him.

Mrs S. Nay now you have tormented the poor man ſufficiently, let him have a little reſt.

Snarl. Stay, he looks as if he wou'd ſpeak to me.

Scout. O dear Mr Snarl.

Snarl. He knows me; I ſaid ſo.

Scout. I beg ten thouſand pardons.

Snarl. No apologies—well.——

Scout.

Scout. That ſince my arrival in this village, I haven't been to ſee you.

Snarl. Not been to ſee me! why this very day you know———

Scout. Yes, to day, to make my excuſes, I ſent an attorney of my acquaintance.

Snarl. An attorney! Eh, ſhall I never ſee my cloth again? but its all a ſham, you yourſelf was the very perſon, by the ſame token your father ow'd mine 50 pounds: Aye, aye, you may ſhake your head, but I ſha'n't quit the place, without either my cloth or my money.

Scout. This wont do I find, I muſt try another method. (*aſide*) Wife, wife, don't you hear them? the thieves are breaking in at the door—but I'll bite 'em—this way—here they come—my muſket—I'll ſhoot 'em. Stop thief! ſtop thief—(*collars* Snarl)—my muſket, my muſket! [*Exit.*

Snarl. A thief! my muſket, ecod, it may be dangerous, to argue with a madman, and a blunderbuſs.

Re-enter SCOUT, *with a birch broom, which he levels at* Snarl, *who ſuppoſing it a muſket, ſcrambles off crying out.*

O Lord! o dear!

Scout. Ha, ha, ha! he's gone at laſt.

Mrs S. Yes, yes, he's gone. You have no further occaſion for me; but ſtay you here for fear of his return. [*Exit.*

Scout.

Scout. So, I have got a reprieve for ſome time at leaſt; here he comes again: Stop thief—ſtop thief—ſtop thief——O its my new client.

Enter SHEEPFACE.

Sheep. At your worſhip's ſervice, Juſtice Mittimus is ready, and the court will ſit immediately.

Scout. Wait till I put on my gown, and be ſure you remember the inſtructions I gave you.

Sheep. Never fear, your worſhip: Baa; practice makes perfect they ſay.

Scout. This way; we have no time to loſe.

Sheep. I have been improving myſelf this half hour paſt, in our pens, and now I am ſo fluent in talking like a ſheep, that I queſtion if his worſhip, and the whole bench together could beat me at it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE—*The Court at the Juſtice's—Table, 5 chairs, Clerk, &c. diſcovered.*

MITTIMUS, 2 JUSTICES, *and* SNARL.

Mit. Well, the court is aſſembled; and the parties may appear. Where is your lawyer, neighbour Snarl?

Snarl. I am my own lawyer.

Enter SCOUT, SHEEPFACE, *and* CONSTABLES.

Scout. (*aſide to* Sheepface) How! raſcal, you have impos'd upon me. Is that the plaintiff?

Sheep. Yes, that's his worſhip, my good maſter.

Scout. (*aſide*) How ſhall I get out of this ſcrape?—If I go off, it will rouze his ſuſpicions; I'll e'en ſtay and outface him.

Snarl.

Snarl. (*seeing* Scout) Heyday, who have we here? the very fellow as I live.

Mit. Neighbour Snarl, you and the Plaintiff begin.

Snarl. Then you muſt know that this thief——

Mit. Come, come, no abuſe.

Snarl. The ſhort and the long of it then is, that this ſcoundrel ſhepherd of mine that was, has robb'd me of fourteen wethers.

Scout. That remains to be prov'd.

Snarl. (*aſide*) His voice by Jupiter.

Mit. What proof have you?

Snarl. Proof—why I—I ſold them this morning,—no I don't mean that—I gave him in charge four yards—no I don't mean that—fourſcore ſheep, I ſhould ſay, and there are but threeſcore and ſix forthcoming.

Scout. I deny the fact.

Snail. Well if I had not left the other in a lunacy fit, I ſhou'd ſwear this was the very man.

Mit. This is the very man, without doubt——but that is not the point at preſent——the fact neighbour Snarl—prove the fact.

Snarl. I prove it by my oath——I mean by the account of my flock;—what's become of the four yards—fourteen ſheep, I ſhould ſay, that are miſſing?

Scout. They are dead of the rot.

Snarl. Zounds! 'tis he himſelf.

Mit. Again, why I tell you once more, neighbour, nobody doubts that. It is aſſerted that your ſheep died of the rot. What do you anſwer to that?

Snarl.

Snarl. I anſwer that it is a confounded lie, and the proof on't is hiding myſelf behind the hedge, who ſhou'd come up but this fellow, and laying hold of one of the fatteſt of my wethers.——Sits down beſide me, and after cajoling me for a while about Witherington, Gomery, he makes no more ado, but carries off four yards of it.

Mit. Four yards of your wethers!

Snarl. Eh, no—my cloth—I ſay my cloth——the other——

Mit. What other, neighbour—what other?

Scout. Dear Sir, he's mad—raving mad.

Mit. I fear ſo—harkye, neighbour Snarl, not all the Juſtices in the county, no nor their clerks either, cou'd make any thing of your evidence. You talk of fourteen wethers ſtole from you, and you jumble up with that four yards of cloth, and Whittington, and I don't know what.—Stick to your wethers I ſay, or I muſt diſcharge the priſoner, but the ſhorteſt way is to examine him myſelf.—Come here my good fellow—hold up your head; what is your name?

Sheep. Baa.

Snarl. He lies; his name is Sheepface.

Mit. Well Sheepface, or Baa, no matter for the name; tell me, is it true that Mr Snarl gave you fourſcore ſheep in charge?

Sheep. Baa.

Mit. How! oh, his fears get the better of him perhaps, come, come, don't be alarm'd—did Mr Snarl catch you at night killing one of his wethers?

Sheep. Baa.

Mit. Heyday, what can this mean?

Scout. Why, sir, the blows the plaintiff gave the poor fellow on his head, have affected his brain, and put him, as your worship sees, beside himself. He's to be trepan'd as soon as the court breaks up, and Mr Minchmeat the surgeon says, it is the whole Materia Medica, to a dose of jalap, that he never recovers.

Snarl. Oh for the matter of that, it was dark night, and when ever I strike, I always strike home, and when and where I can.

Scout. There Sir, he confesses the fact, a voluntary confession.

Mit. Aye, aye, a voluntary confession; release the prisoner, I find no cause of complaint against him.

[*Exit* Constable.

Snarl. But I appeal—As to you Mr Irongrey, we shall meet. (*to* Scout.)

Mit. O fie Mr Snarl, you are much to blame.

Snarl. To blame quotha; one runs off with my cloth; the other cuts the throats of my wethers: one pays me with Gomery, and the other with Baa; yet after all I am to blame. As for you Mr Justice—I'll appeal to a higher court; and that you shall find, Mr Wiseacre. [*Exit.*

Scout. (*to* Sheepface) Go thank his worship, go.

Sheep.

Sheep. Baa, baa.

Mit. Enough, enough! poor fellow, go and be trepan'd directly; go. [*Exit.*

Sheep. Baa.

Scout. Well I have brought you off with flying colours, you see; you are a man of your word I know; and I am sure you will pay me generously as you have promis'd me.

Sheep. Baa.

Scout. Yes, yes; you play'd your part very well, but that isn't the point now—my fee;—do you see—my fee.

Sheep. Baa.

Scout. What, am I to be outwitted by a walking scrubbing post? a two legg'd bellwether? a——

Sheep. Baa.

Scout. So I am outdone here I find—but come, will you assist in bringing about my daughter's marriage. If the scheme succeeds, if you and your wife, my maid Kate, play your parts well, I shall think myself sufficiently paid—if not, I'll shew you what it is to attempt cheating a lawyer.—But to your hiding place scoundrel, do you hear?

Sheep. Baa, baa. [*Exit.*

Scout. The devil baa you: but come, his worship seems so persuaded of the fellow's dangerous situation, that it will be no hard matter to persuade him he's at the point of death: but here he comes, and Kate along

with him. The work's begun I see; I muſt ſtay and lend a hand.

Enter MITTIMUS, *and* KATE.

Mit. Poor fellow! dead do you ſay, and ſo ſuddenly too?

Kate. Yes—ye—es, Sir,—(Oh, oh! o dear. (*crying*)

Stout. Poor wench!——An ugly affair this for Mr Snarl.

Mit. don't weep ſo child; I'll ſee juſtice done you.

Kate. Oh! my huſband! my poor dear huſband! Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Mit. Nay, be comforted; conſider you were married only yeſterday morning, and——

Kate. Aye, that's the reaſon; had he liv'd a day or two longer it wou'd have been ſome conſo-la-ti-on, oh, oh, oh!

Mit. The murderer ſhall be puniſhed; I have given the neceſſary orders already, and you ſhall ſhortly have the comfort of ſeeing him hang'd.

Stout. Hang'd! poor neighbour Snarl! ſo valuable a member of the community too. He'll be a public loſs neighbour Mittimus; a public loſs!

Mit. True he was a uſeful man in the country, but what can I do; here's a man murder'd; and his widow demands juſtice.

Stout. But what ſervice wou'd it be to you Kate to have Mr Snarl hang'd—wou'd it not be better to——

Kate.

Kate. Why Sir, I am not revengeful, and if there was any friendly way of making up matters, you know how I love your worſhip's god-daughter.

Mit. My god-daughter! what concern has ſhe in this affair?

Kate. Why an' pleaſe your worſhip, Charles, Mr Snarl's only ſon is in love with Miſs Harriet, your worſhip's god-daughter; but Mr Snarl won't conſent to the marriage. Now your worſhip is a man of learning, and if you ſet about it, I am ſure might contrive ſomething to pleaſe all parties.

Mit. I have it. We'll huſh matters up on condition that Mr Snarl conſents to the match, but neighbour Scout, do you conſent?

Scout. Why I had no intention of marrying my daughter yet; but to ſave Mr Snarl from being hang'd, come I conſent.

Mit. They are bringing him this way, I ſee, leave us together.

Scout. I'll but juſt fill up the blanks of a *bond*, which you'll oblige him to ſign; otherwiſe he might retract you know. [*Exit* Scout *and* Kate.

Enter SNARL *and* CONSTABLES.

Mit. Well neighbour Snarl, the poor wretch you beat, they ſay is dead, and you confeſs'd the fact you know.

Snarl. I did; a bliſter on my tongue for it.

Mit. The law muſt take its courſe; but firſt let me know whether you wou'd rather be hang'd, or conſent to your Son's wedding.

Snarl. Neither one, nor t'other.

Mit. Lawyer Scout has a daughter, beautiful, and well accomplish'd, and your Son is in love with her.

Snarl. What's that to me?

Mit. Now matters might be huſh'd up, if you conſent to their marriage.

Snarl. I'll be hang'd firſt.

Mit. Away with him to priſon then.

Snarl. Hold! hold! I'll conſent.

Enter SCOUT *and* CHARLES.

Scout. Here's a bond ready for ſigning, and Mr Snarl if any of my family, can be of ſervice to you, in your preſent misfortune, you may command me.

Snarl. Eh, what do you want another four yards of cloth raſcal?——but come give me this bond. There, (*ſigns it.*)

Mit. Come, Charles, you and I will be witneſſes.—So you have had a fortunate eſcape neighbour Snarl, I wiſh you joy of your good luck.

Snarl. Yes, this has been a lucky day for me truly.

Enter two COUNTRYMEN *dragging in* SHEEPFACE.

Coun. Bring him along.

Sheep. Mercy good folks!

Mit. Whence comes this ghoſt?

Coun. Why a'nt pleaſe your worſhip, we found this fellow hid under a heap of barley in our barn, ſo we brought

brought him before your worſhips, to make him give an account of himſelf.

Mit. What's become of the blows, your maſter gave you on the head?

Sheep. Gone along with his fourteen wethers.

Snarl. What raſcal, you are not dead then?

Sheep. Baa.

Snarl. Let me come at him; I have paid for the killing, and it is but fair, I ſhou'd have the worth of my money, ſo if I am not allow'd to choak him I retract the conſent I gave.

Scout. With all my heart; ſo you may pay the penalty of your bond, which is two thouſand guineas.

Snarl. Two thouſand devils!—But come, no joking apart, you'll pay me the fifty pounds your father ow'd mine?

Scout. Yes, when you can produce me his note.

Snarl. Mercy upon me! but then my four yards of cloth.

Scout. I'll wear them at your Son's wedding.

Snarl. Well, at any rate, give me my ſhare of the gooſe.

Scout. It flew back this morning to Norfolk.

Snarl. Then this raſcal ſhall pay for all, and I'll begin by having him hang'd.

Char. 'Tis time I own the truth Father, he has done nothing, but by my direction, and to ſupply my neceſſities, therefore ſuffer me to meet your future indul-

gence,

gence, by the means of conquering all ſuch temptations henceforward.

Snarl. Hem!—well, it muſt be ſo then, I think; and to prevent any future abuſe, I'll ſell off all my ſheep, and then they'll neither die of the rot, nor ſhall I need a ſhepherd.

Scout. Well ſo far I have ſucceeded fully, both for myſelf and client; but a cauſe in which we are all intereſted remains yet to be determin'd; which we muſt learn from the deciſion of this tribunal. Whether the *Village Lawyer* is to be ſtruck off the *roll*, or not.

FINIS.